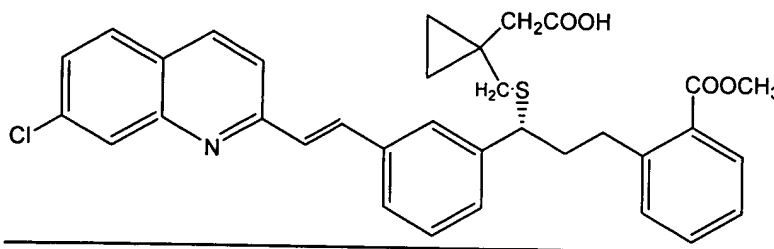


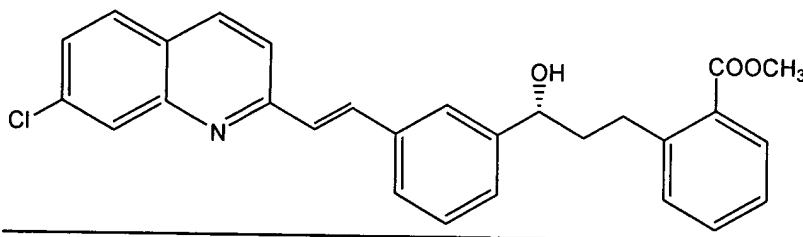
CLAIMS OF THE APPLICATION:

1. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of montelukast or a salt thereof, said process comprising reacting a late intermediate compound ~~which is 2-[1-[1-R-3-[2-(7-chloro-quinolin-2-yl)-vinyl]-[phenyl]-3-[2-methoxy-carbonyl-phenyl]propyl-sulfonyl-methyl]cyclo-propyl]acetic acid~~ having the formula:



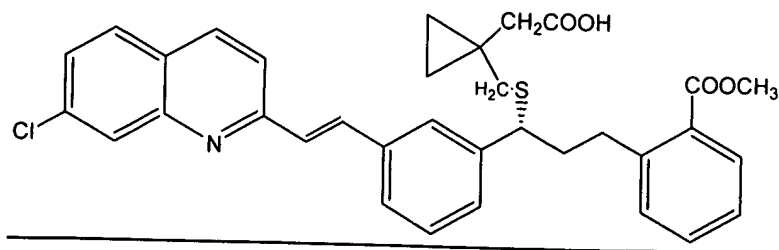
or a salt thereof with methyl magnesium chloride or methyl magnesium bromide in an organic solvent.

2. (Currently amended) The process of claim 1, further comprising reacting an earlier intermediate compound ~~which is methyl 2-(3-R-(3-(2-(7-chloro-2-quinolinyl)-ethenyl)-3-hydroxy-propyl)-benzoate~~ having the formula:

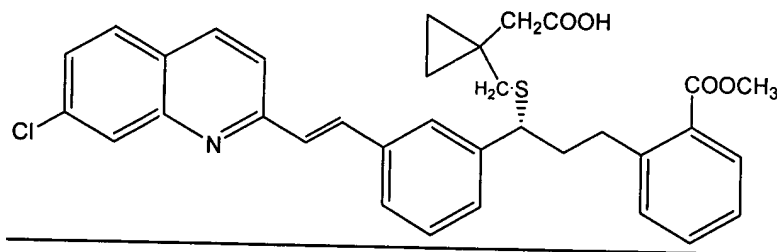


with methane sulfonyl chloride or toluene sulfonyl chloride to obtain a mesylated or tosylated derivative of said earlier intermediate compound; followed by a reaction of said mesylated or tosylated derivative with 1-mercapto methyl cyclopropane acetic acid in a polar solvent in [[a]] the presence of a base to obtain said late intermediate compound.

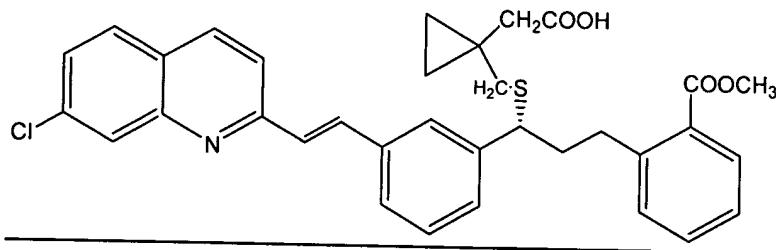
3. (Currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein said late intermediate compound is an amine salt of 2-[1-[1-R-3-[2-(7-chloro-quinolin-2-yl)-vinyl]-[phenyl]-3-[2-methoxy-carbonyl-phenyl]propyl-sulfonyl-methyl]cyclo-propyl]acetic acid the compound having the formula:



4. (Currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein said late intermediate compound is a dicyclohexyl amine salt of 2-[1-[1 R-3-[2 (7 chloro quinolin 2 yl) vinyl [phenyl]-3-[2-methoxy carbonyl phenyl]propyl-sulfonyl methyl]cyclo propyl]acetic acid the compound having the formula:



5. (Currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein said reacting step further includes treating said dicyclohexyl amine salt of 2-[1-[1 R-3-[2 (7 chloro quinolin 2 yl) vinyl [phenyl]-3-[2-methoxy carbonyl phenyl]propyl-sulfonyl methyl]cyclo propyl]acetic acid the compound having the formula:

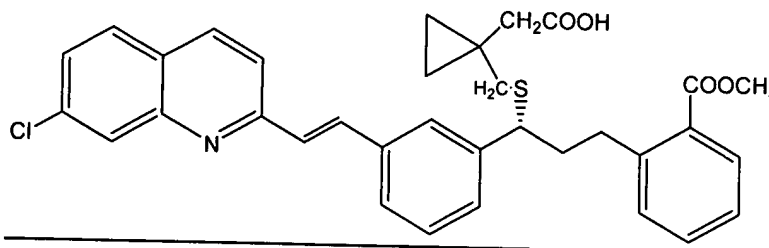


with an organic acid prior to the reaction with said methyl magnesium chloride or methyl magnesium bromide.

6. (Original) The process of claim 5, wherein said organic acid is acetic acid.
7. (Currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein said organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether, diisopropyl ether, 2-methoxy ethanol, toluene, ethyl benzene, 1,4-dioxane, and the mixtures thereof.

8. (Original) The process of claim 1, wherein said reacting step is carried out at a temperature ranging from about -10 °C to about 50 °C.

9. (Currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein said reacting step further includes converting said dicyclohexyl amine salt of 2-[1-[1-R-3-[2-(7-chloro quinolin-2-yl)-vinyl]-phenyl]-3-[2-methoxy-carbonyl-phenyl]propyl-sulfonyl-methyl]-cyclo propyl]acetic acid the compound having the formula:



to [[a]] montelukast free acid, followed by a conversion of said montelukast free acid to an amine salt of montelukast.

10. (Currently amended) The process of claim 9, wherein said amine salt of montelukast is a tertiary butyl amine salt or a phenyl ethylamine salt.

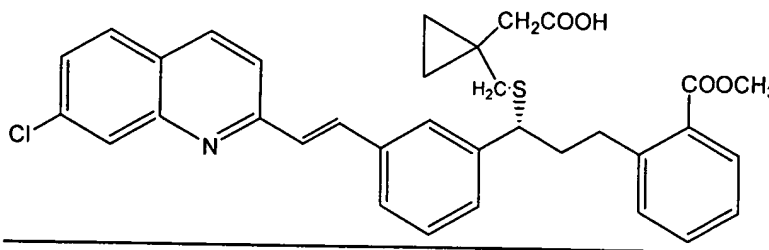
11. (Original) The process of claim 9, wherein said montelukast free acid is isolated from a solvent selected from the group consisting of toluene, ethyl acetate, acetonitrile, heptane, hexane and mixtures thereof, and purified by precipitating it from a solvent selected from the group consisting of toluene, methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-propanol, ethyl acetate, methyl acetate, acetonitrile and mixtures thereof.

12. (Original) The process of claim 9, further comprising converting said amine salt of montelukast to a sodium salt of montelukast.

13. (Currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein said ~~starting~~ late intermediate compound is reacted with methyl magnesium chloride in a mixture of ~~tetrahydrofurane~~ tetrahydrofuran and toluene.

14. (Original) The process of claim 2, wherein said base is selected from sodium methoxide, sodium ethoxide, sodium hydride and n-butyl lithium.
15. (Original) The process of claim 14, wherein said polar solvent is selected from the group consisting of methanol, dichloromethane, dimethylformamide and mixtures thereof.
16. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of montelukast sodium comprising:
- (i) providing a solution of ~~starting~~ montelukast free acid in a halogenated solvent, aromatic solvent, or mixtures thereof;
 - (ii) treating said solution with an alcoholic base to convert said montelukast free acid into a sodium salt of montelukast; and
 - (iii) adding a cyclic or acyclic hydrocarbon solvent to said solution thereby precipitating said sodium salt of montelukast.
17. (Currently amended) The process of claim 16, wherein said ~~starting~~ montelukast free acid is generated in situ from an amine salt of montelukast in the presence of an organic acid.
18. (Original) The process of claim 16, wherein said halogenated solvent is selected from the group consisting of chloroform, dichloromethane, and dichloroethane.
19. (Original) The process of claim 16, wherein said halogenated solvent is dichloromethane.
20. (Currently amended) The process of claim 16, wherein said aromatic solvent is selected from the group consisting of toluene, ethyl benzene ~~or~~ and xylene.
21. (Currently amended) The process of claim ~~20~~ 16, wherein said aromatic solvent is toluene.

22. (Original) The process of claim 16, wherein said organic acid is acetic acid.
23. (Currently amended) The process of claim 16, wherein the alcoholic base is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, sodium methoxide or sodium ethoxide in methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol, 2-propanol or tert-butanol.
24. (Currently amended) The process of claim 16, wherein the alcoholic base is methanolic sodium hydroxide.
25. (Currently amended) The process of claim 17, wherein said amine salt of montelukast is a tertiary butyl amine salt or a phenyl ethylamine salt.
26. (Original) The process of claim 16, wherein said hydrocarbon solvent is selected from the group consisting of cyclohexane, hexane, n-heptane and mixtures thereof.
27. (Currently amended) The process of claim 17, further comprising reacting ~~2-[1-[1 R 3 [2 (7-chloro-quinolin-2-yl)-vinyl]-phenyl]-3-[2-methoxy-carbonyl-phenyl]propyl-sulfonyl-methyl]-cyclo-propyl]-acetic acid~~ the compound having the formula:



or a salt thereof with methyl magnesium bromide or methyl magnesium chloride in toluene, tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether or diisopropyl ether to obtain said amine salt of montelukast.